

# The Pursuit of Holiness

Mark 7:1-23

## Intro question:

What does the pursuit of holiness look like?

## 1. Scripture Driven: Not Tradition Driven vs. 1-13

The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law made their allegiance over human tradition, which skewed their understanding in how to live for God. Jesus rebuked them and revealed to them through using Scripture (Isaiah 29:13, Exodus 20:12, 21:17; Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 5:16) that their worship is worthless since they are not following God's Word.

The Pharisees had their own ideas about clean and unclean. Although they were not priests who ministered in the temple, the Pharisees used purification rituals for their daily life that were only meant for priests at the temple. The Pharisees washed their hands, along with their bowls and cups, when they ate at their meals. They envisioned contact with "common" people in the marketplace as potentially defiling, making them unclean. Therefore, they ritually washed before eating to maintain purity.

As a result, Jesus is targeting the Pharisaic tradition that had developed over time to exclude people, which was a distortion of how God sees people.

As followers of Jesus Christ, our allegiance is to God and to His Word. When we pursue God according to His authoritative Scriptures, we are experiencing the correct way to pursue holiness.

## 2. Self: Understanding My Heart vs. 14-23

The religious leaders misunderstood what caused someone to be seen as unclean in God's eyes. Jesus made it clear that humanity is sinful and will naturally sin against God, as our hearts naturally have evil thoughts which leads to sinful actions.

We cannot pursue God's Holiness on our own, as each one of us has a sinful nature; we all have rebelled against God by not living according to His standard (1 John 1:8). That is why we need the Messiah. Jesus came to pay for our sin through His death and resurrection so that we can be free to live life with God.

## Questions:

- What should we do if a tradition is distracting us from true worship?
- What happens when man-made traditions are revered above God's word?
- What church traditions either can or do stand in the way of non-believers becoming interested in Christianity?
- What can you do to honor the teachings from God's Word above your traditions or the influences of Canadian culture?
- What is one step you can take to guard against hypocrisy?